LEGENDS OF
BLACKROCK

by DANNY HUGHES

Legends of

- Saint Brigid's Shrine, Faughart
- Our Lady's Well, Lady Well Terrace
- Long Woman's Grave
- Castlebellingham
- Saint Fursey
- Old places of Historical interest

Guide to accommodation and general services

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Introduction

THIS souvenir booklet of the lovely seaside resort of Blackrock, Co. Louth, is intended to illustrate the very many reasons WHY a holiday spent here can give such satisfaction.

Geographically. Blackrock is situated in a direct line half way between Dublin to the South and Belfast to the North, with main roads leading here from Dublin and Belfast Airports.

Visitors from all over the world come here during the summer season, especially from England, Scotland and of course, all the Irish counties are well represented.

Blackrock is a distance of only three miles from County Louth's principal town, DUNDALK, and a distance of seventeen miles from Drogheda, another fine town on the Dublin-Belfast highway, which cuts through the southern end of Blackrock, making Blackrock accessible to all traffic.

Blackrock is Ireland's most popular seaside resort, unrivalled in scenic beauty and renowned for the wondrous landscapes that can be viewed from its shore and surrounding by-ways. It stands on a spacious bay backed by the great rugged range of the Cooley mountains arming their way from the lofty Slieve Gullion to the distant Slieve Foy. This spectacle of soaring peaks and wooded slopes fringing the northern side of the bay is a wondrous treat to the eye, while the southern stretches directly opposite, from the quiet Lurgangreen to the far distant Dunany Point with its enchanting scenery and lovely shore. This long span of undulating countryside of hills and dales and green pastures fringing the waters of the bay reveals the breath-taking beauty of Irish scenery at its best.

Blackrock is the holiday resort to choose for a visit. Here Ireland's world-renowned charm is enhanced by the lovely seashore with its miles of golden sand in glorious panorama, and, above all, though Blackrock has kept abreast of modern times with its preparations to welcome and satisfy the visitor's quest for pleasure, it still retains that welcoming warmth and personal concern for each one who comes here: this special attention is well-known to all who have enjoyed their holidays in this locality. Accommodation is superb, its hotels and guest-houses are worthy of the high reputation accredited to them. The northern end of Blackrock, towards the Square, this lovely residential area, can be specially recommended. Rockmount is another select place for accommodation, as is also the Crescent and the New Line. All these houses in the northern end of Blackrock overlook the sea and have the green fields as their background. The southern end of Blackrock, towards

Cocklehill, can also boast a high reputation for catering and accommodation, while the centre of Blackrock, opposite the Promenade, needs no better recommendation than the many satisfied visitors who come here year after year.

Blackrock's souvenir shops and lounge bars are the most up-to-date in Ireland and certainly will possess something to interest the visitors.

Dancing and skating fans are in for a special treat with Blackrock's two dance halls and new skating hall. The golfer, the angler, and the tennis player, and those interested in historical buildings will all find their holiday worth while, and above all, the swimmer and those just interested in paddling or walking on the strand will have the time of their lives; while the children can bathe, paddle and romp around in the sea in complete safety for Blackrock's firm sand is a children's paradise.

Those desirous of seeing the whole county and visiting places further afield, Blackrock's mystery bus tours offer every facility, bringing the visitor all through the Cooley mountains and as far away as the famous Mourne mountains which roll down to the sea. Visits are made to Armagh, the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland and to Tara, the home of the kings and druids of old, while the local bus service arranges tours to St. Brigid's Stream and many other devotional and beauty spots.

One thing Blackrock can really boast about and that is its air. Medical science affirms the belief that the air at Blackrock is the purest and healthiest in all Ireland. This great blessing is explained by reason of the tide coming in and going out over such a great expanse of firm golden sand; also the fact that the sea air is impregnated with the fresh mountain air that comes from the Cooley mountains fringing the shores of the bay. The visitors will soon recognize this invigorating air filling their lungs with a freshness never experienced before.

Blackrock's strand is the safest and cleanest in all Ireland and those who spend their leisure hours strolling about on its cool surface will certainly say good-bye to their foot troubles, and for those who just wish to sit on the sea front and watch the passing crowds on the street or the jolly holiday-makers on the seashore the day will hold many surprises for at Blackrock there is always something to interest the visitor and something to add a smile to the sunshine that seems always to shine here. There is the sea with all its pleasurable attributes, the surrounding wooded country roads and emerald pastures and within easy reach of Dundalk with its exciting shops and places of interest. Blackrock may have rivals for amusement and modern facilities, but the visitor who comes here will find added to all his pleasures, the greatest gift of all, the gift of a breath of the purest and healthiest air in the world, with the added essence of a truly Irish homely welcome, and may it be said of you as it is said of so many already: "If you come this way but once you will certainly come again".

DANIEL HUGHES.

ATTRACTIONS

DANCING

Blackrock can claim to be in the forefront of Irish seaside resorts with its dancing facilities. Evitas and Concert Hall with Pavilion Ballroom offer the dancer all that is modern and up-to-date in dancing. Both these fine dance halls (at the northern end of Blackrock) are noted for their good floors and healthy surroundings.

SKATING

Blackrock's Skating Hall is a tribute to its proprietors. Its design and spacious spring floor are outstanding achievements worthy of noting. Skating competitions and dancing on skates are a special feature of the skating programmes all during the summer season and those wishing to learn this fine enjoyable exercise are provided with every encouragement and help by the attendants.

GOLFING

An eighteen-hole golf course is but a short distance from the sea front. This golf course is the venue for many professional championships and its reputation is known all over the world. Its lovely greens and fairways, set amidst Ireland's most picturesque surroundings, with the Cooley mountains and the sea ever in view, must surely appeal to the golfer visitor.

TENNIS

In the grounds of the Fairways Hotel two fine tennis courts are open for the visitor's enjoyment. Games are arranged by the club who supervise and look after the courts.

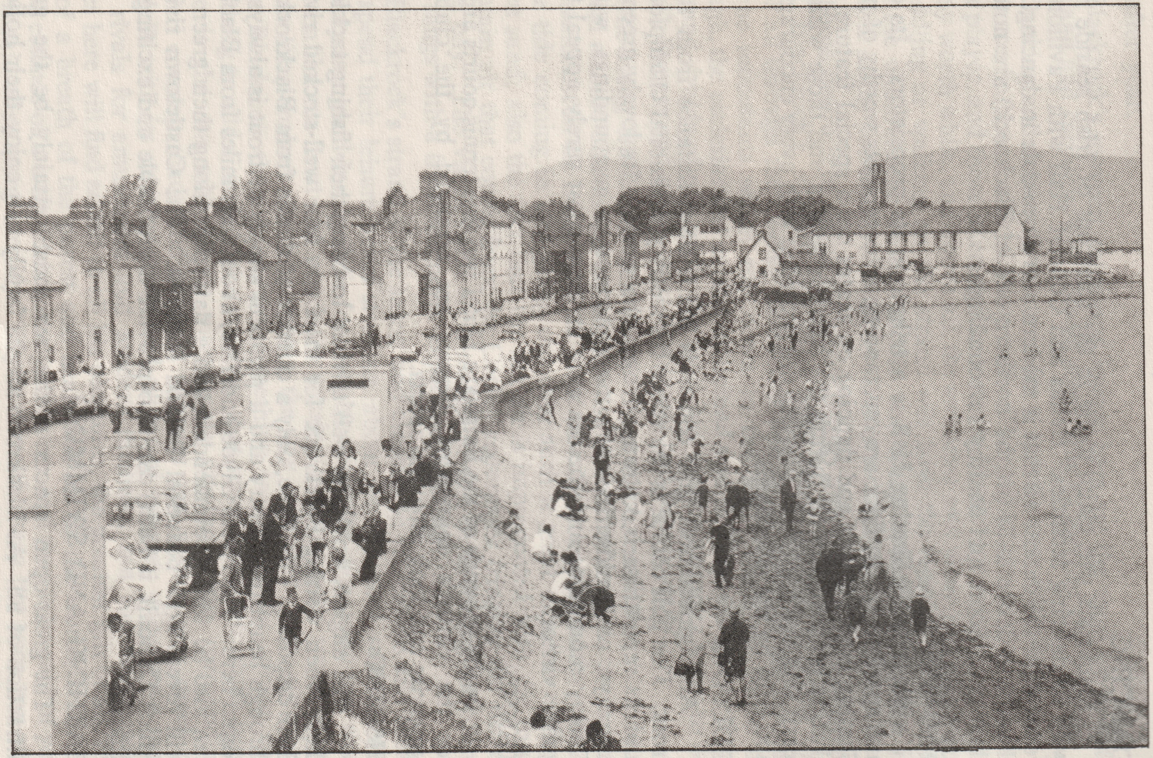
FISHING

The anglers would be well advised to bring their fishing tackle with them when visiting Blackrock for there are four well-stocked rivers at their disposal. The Fane, only a quarter of a mile from Blackrock, runs through beautiful country and a plentiful supply of trout is always to be found here. The rivers Glyde and Dee, about four miles from Blackrock, can also be well recommended, and a day spent along their green banks will reveal how beautiful Ireland really is. The Castletown river (on which Dundalk is built) can also provide a profitable and exciting day's angling.

BATHING AND SWIMMING

The great open spaces of the sea must certainly be the greatest attraction of all. At Blackrock all the family can enjoy their holiday in safety for the firm golden sand eliminates any fear of danger; even when

MODERN VIEW OF BLACKROCK



the tide is on the shore the children can bathe and romp about in the sea with safety, while swimmers can find their depths at the northern and southern ends of the shore, and those who just like to rest in the sun will find ample spaces to ensure their comfort.

WALKING

The wooded roads and boreens that lead the way from the shore into what can be truly called Ireland's loveliest countryside must surely demand a visit, and those fond of Nature's most startling revelations of green fields and pleasant by-ways can spend many relaxed hours admiring the beauty of Ireland with the vision of mountain and sea always in view. Clermont Park with its long straggling roads and scattered plantations is a walk that certainly will reward the effort, as is also a walk round Haggardstown with its lovely old church and remains of a castle-house to admire.

CYCLING

A cycle run through the busy town of Dundalk and right into the Cooley mountains via the lovely wooded Ballymascanlan, the decoratively wooded Tipping's Mount, and the winding slopes of Jenkinstown Hill, will certainly prove an exciting and pleasurable experience, for here in all its scenic perfection is Mother Nature's fairest picture of Ireland's breath-taking beauty, a pattern of rugged slopes and precipitous mountain gorges mingled with the gentle fragrance of the mountain flowers and timorous gazes of the docile mountain sheep. A CYCLE RUN south of Blackrock through the quiet picturesque Lurgangreen, via Castlebellingham (a busy little town), here turning south-east and on to Annagassan, is a pleasant revealing journey which can continue on through Salterstown to the quiet and lovely Dunany Point where the silence is broken only by the waves of the sea, and the cry of the seagulls. This journey will well prove worth while with breath-taking seascape all the way to admire. From Dunany Point Blackrock can be viewed rihgt across the bay—with its long straggling outline clearly visible.

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PLACES OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

KELLY'S MONUMENT

In Dundalk, where the local bus stops, this monument stands to the memory of Captain Kelly and three of his crew, all of whom lost their lives while going to the rescue of a ship called the "Mary Stoddart" in distress in the bay. Strange to relate, all the members of this doomed ship were rescued.

ST. COLMCILLE'S TREE

The miracle of nature stands erect to-day as it has done for ages, although its whole base has decayed and its seemingly only support is a few layers of bark. It was here, tradition claims, St. Colmcille rested while writing his prophecies. It is also said that pilgrimages took place here many years ago. It is about 200 yards north of Blessed Oliver Church.

NAILY ROCK

This much-talked-about rock at the rear of the Skating Hall can certainly claim a right to its strange name, for its surface is completely covered with nails driven into it by those expecting good fortune by such a process. To succeed in driving a nail into its rough surface should certainly merit good luck for the effort. There are also hollows in the rock into which pins are dropped for good luck.

BALLYBARRACK

Here amid the hilly countryside which was so well-known to Blessed Oliver Plunkett, to-day stands a shrine to his memory. It was here that he often said Mass and consoled the troubled minds of his people of those uncertain times. His life is a worth-while story of heroism born of love for God.

DUNMAHON CASTLE

Not far from Heynestown is another sturdy landmark of former days. Legend tells us that during the middle of the seventeenth century a terrible massacre took place here, 200 to 250 people assembled to hear Mass are said to have been butchered.

THE BEACH AT BLACKROCK, CO LOUTH

CHURCH OF ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT, BLACKROCK, CO. LOUTH

THE BLACKROCK

UNFOLDING the legends of many a noble land, none bears more heroism within its golden pages than that of the legend of the blackrock—in this sad, yet noble story lies the fullness of hate and spite alongside the simple beauty of folk possessed by the virtue of innocence and their belief of true love for each other, even unto death.

Blackrock is today a popular seaside resort near to the town of Dundalk, in the County of Louth. Many years ago, at the time that our story begins, there were but five or six small houses scattered about in the fields opposite the seashore. At that time it is said that the rocks were as white as snow. The houses were occupied by fisherfolk who made a meagre living from the sea—while the young men fished for salmon at sea, the elderly engaged in repairing the nets and the boats. Also some of them fished with lines for flat fish and a cheap fish called salmon bass.

Each day, as the fishermen walked across the sands to their boats, a young girl called Mary helped them by carrying some of the equipment needed for the boats. She always walked a little way off from the others with a young fisherboy called Matthew. They were in love and each day, as he set off in his boat with his mates, the shyly kissed him on the cheek. She would wait for hours on the seashore for his return.

Mary was a simple, innocent and beautiful girl. She was tall and slim, and her long black hair resembled the waves as it hung down over her shoulders, floating in the breeze with that natural beauty that caused all who saw her to marvel at her youthful loveliness. Each evening as the boats returned from the sea she would run to meet Matthew, kiss him on the cheek and slip her hand into his as he told her of the day's happenings.

One day, as she waited by the shore in her usual spot, the squire from the big house rode up to her on his great grey horse. "Good day, sir", she bade him. He halted his mount before her. "What's your name?" he asked.

"My name, sir is Mary Carroll".

"You live in the small cottage by the rocks, then", he said.

"That is so, sir", she replied.

"You are very beautiful, Mary", he continued adding "What are you doing here?"

"I come here every day to await the return of my boyfriend from the sea".

"What a waste of beauty, my dear", said he in a mocking way, "one as beautiful as you should have the choice of the finest and richest young men in the land".

Mary smiled. "O'm afraid, sir, my heart has no desire for rich young men. I am but a simple fisherman's daughter, and it is in Matthew as my loved one that I find the fullness of my heart's expectation" she responded.

"How can you be so sure of that, my dear? You have never enjoyed the luxury which wealth and affluence can offer you. Take this card. It is an invitation to a ball I am giving next week. Accept the challenge—come and see with your own eyes the side of life that could be yours for the asking".

Mary took the card and, with a quiet smile, she said "I have no intention of going to your ball. Even if I had, I have not clothes fitting for such a grand occasion".

"I will see to it that you have", the squire said to her as he spurred his fine horse into action, leaving her sitting on the rocks to contemplate how she would look in fine clothes such as rich ladies wore and her mind filled with the sounds of beautiful music.

She stood up and circled round and round in an imaginary ballroom filled with elegant gentlemen and their ladies. All eyes were on her for she was so young and beautiful in the splendid clothes she was wearing. She was so light on her feet that even a prince asked her for a dance and he engaged her in wonderful conversation. In due course the squire demanded a dance with her. In truth he was really quite charming and he kept saying to her "Was I not right to tell you that you were wasting away your life with the commonfolk, while this world was yours but for reaching out to grasp it?" She hummed to herself each tune that the orchestra played. How elated she was!

Suddenly a voice called out her name and two arms reached out to hold her—in an instant she was awakened from her dreaming.

"What was making you so happy? You were singing and dancing as if you were floating on a cloud". It was Matthew who spoke.

"Matthew!" Mary cried out as she fell into his arms, "it was so wonderful. I was at a ball and everyone of importance was there. I danced with the prince and with the squire and the orchestra played all my favourite tunes. Oh Matthew, if only you could have been there you would have seen, as I have done, how it is possible if you are rich or, as the squire said, if you are as beautiful as I am, to enjoy life".

"It was only a dream". Matthew said. "We all find ourselves in wonderful places, and with such charming people, when we are dreaming. I, like you, often dream of going to cities a long way away, even as far away as the end of the rainbow. There I spend hour upon hour walking through the most fabulous buildings and in the company of wonderful people. When I awake, however, I am angry with the world around me for a moment or two until I realise the comfort of being here with my own folks, who love me so dearly, and with you too, my dearest Mary—this fact outweighs a million times the wonder of the cities that I have visited and the people with whom I have been so entranced. This is our world. For me it has all the beauty and joy that I could even wish to possess".

"I'm sorry Matthew for not realising that truth. I was so excited as it was the first time that I had ever pictured myself away from this barren place, where the same hat and dress will probably need to last me for a lifetime. I know that nobody is to blame—we are all poor people and that's how it will always be, for us it's our destiny".

Matthew tried to reassure Mary by saying, "Perhaps if you were really to go to such a ball, as you have been dreaming, you would certainly find the people there beautifully dressed and smiling happily to each other yet, within themselves, they yearn for the blessings of true love and simple lives like ours".

Mary smiled. "I had better agree with you for I could never afford the grand clothes that people wear to such occasions".

"In that case, Mary my dearest, it would be best if we left our adventures into the world of grandeur to our dreams".

"We had better, indeed", Mary said as they walked home. "Am I seeing things?", she asked, as they approached the cottage where she lived. There, outside the front door she saw a horse and carriage with two men in bright coloured uniforms carrying a huge wooden chest into her home. "Goodness me", she cried out as she began to run", "what can the squire's men be delivering to our house?".

"Perhaps the squire meant what he said when he invited you to his banquet and is sending you a trunk of clothes to wear", Matthew said, somewhat mockingly.

"Don't be silly, Matthew", Mary answered, "I'm sure he is not that generous". As they spoke the carriage drove off and, when they entered the house, Mary's mother was staring at the chest. "It's for you, Mary" she said, "The squire sent it!".

What in the world is in it?" Mary asked out loud, "it must be a mistake".

"Open it and see", Matthew said. "You open it for me, Matthew—I'm too exicted".

Slowly Matthew lifted the lid of the chest until they all could look inside. What they saw made them gasp in wonder. "Oh my god", Mary cried as she stared at the beautiful dresses and shoes contained in the chest. "They are so beautiful". she murmured, "they are magnificent. I must still be dreaming. They are so perfect that I am almost afraid to touch them".

"But why would the squire send you all these expensive clothes." her mother asked, "he only knows you to bid you the time of day".

"He has been filling her head with a lot of nonsense about the world of grandeur and riches, and the well to do people to whom he can introduce her", said Matthew.

"Is that true, Mary." her mother demanded, "has he geen giving you a lot of silly ideas to lead you away from reality?" "Your world is here among your own kind. Your happiness is living with us fisherfolk".

"He has told me that I am a beautiful girl, well suited for a better way of life than is to be found in the squalor and poverty of this place. He has promised to introduce me to the well to do people and, who knows, maybe I could be a very important person too". As she said this Mary took a dress from the chest, touching the soft warmth of the fabric on her cheek. "It feels like the velvet petals of a rose and it has the fragrance of a rose in full bloom. Who could be fairer than me at the ball?"

She fits the dress against her body and dances around the kitchen, humming as she does so. "Stop this nonsense" her mother cries, "When your father hears of all this foolishness that fills your head he will put you across his knee and scalp your bottom till it's blue". Facing Matthew she said, "Are you angry with me for dancing and singing around". "I love you Mary, I will always love you. I could never be angry with you, if you choose to let this squire lure you away from me, I shall die". Mary kissed his cheek, "No matter where I go or with whom I share my company. I will never love you less than I do now". "At least once in everyones life they have to face a challenge; to go to this banquet or ball is that challenge for me; if you should persuade me not to go then for the rest of my life I should live with that yearning torturing the life out of me; in my dreams I would see myself in the midst of luxury, great wealth and happiness—and if I lived to be a hundred that mirage of friendship and the affluence of the world, which was at my fingertips would haunt me till I died with its echoing cry of poor simple fool, you had not the courage to reach out and take the world in your hand when it was yours for the taking".

Day after day and night after night she dreamt about the great occasion when she in all her finery would attend the banquet and ball. She would dance around the kitchen with one of the dresses held to her body, and not even the derisive threats from her mother to have her locked up in an institution restrained her excitement; everywhere she went the strains of soft music by an orchestra haunted her, she was living in the clouds and even as she waited on the shore for Matthew's return from fishing, she would dance around humming or singing to herself. One evening the squire came by to ask if she liked the clothes he had sent her, "Like them" Mary answered, "not in all my life did I even dream of such beautiful clothes, they must have cost you a fortune, and taken years of care and love to make. The squire who was twice Mary's age yet a fine young man answered "I like beautiful things; I like fine clothes, well selected, and well cooked food, I like well matured wine, with a mellow flavour; I like honest people, and above all I like gentle mannered and well shaped young girls; I like everything about you; you are very beautiful, unassuming, and above all unspoiled by the deceit and cunning of the bevy of ladies that flock to my banquets with the guile of enchantress in their pretty faces and on their wicked tongues, you are like a breath of spring to me, uncomplicated, and above all I trust willing to gratify my company with your friendship".

"I am in love with a fisherman, called Matthew" said Mary, "I told you of this, I can give you my ever lasting gratitude nothing more". The squire smiled, "My carriage will call for you next Thursday night". I'll be waiting", Mary said, as he waved the squire farewell, she felt the air was filled with music and she danced around and around, humming to herself until Matthew called her name. She almost choked as she tried to relate to him all the exciting news she had to tell him, and I am to go off to the banquet in a carriage. "Oh dearest be with me in spirit so that we can share this wonderful evening, it will be our treasure chest to reveal its golden treasures of memories for the rest of our lives". "I'm so happy I want everyone to share my happiness with me". She kissed his cheek and carried two of the salmon he had caught home with her.

All through the day that followed, her excitement was so real and full of youthful girlishness its contagious spirit affected not only her own mother and father, but all of the fishermen and their families that they were acquainted with, and when the great day came everyone seemed to crowd into the little cottage with helpful suggestions and an abundance of good wishes. An old woman called Bessy Jane, whose son sometimes fished with Matthew's boat, but more often he was making poteen with some wild friends of his, and was always missing. Bess who had not much love for anyone came to see Mary's beautiful clothes and to wish her well. "Take my advice" she said, "get your hands on one of them rich ones; and get away from this god forsaken place where poverty and hard work will stare you in the face every morning you rise from your bed. I know it my dear and so does your mother and father, watching the boats go out on the incoming tide, and coming back on the ebbtide with nothing to show for their labours, but hungry bellies craving for food that isn't there to satisfy the pain. Now is your chance my lass, you've got the good figure and the winning charm. Come back with a Prince as your prizes and ride high on the crest of a wave for the rest of your life". Mary was smiling as the old lady gave her advice, "I'll see", Mary replied. "See, my foot" Bess cried as she was leaving, "Go out and catch yourself a big one, a rich one, that can give you the grandeur and luxury we never had the chance to reach out for."

Soon Mary was dressed and ready, what excitement as she danced around wildly as her mother and friends tried to put the finishing touches to her clothes. The sound of horses hooves on the stones outside signalled the approach of the carriage, there was a knock upon the door, and a voice of one of the coachmen cried out "The Squire's coach is awaiting Miss Mary Carroll". What a moment of confusion; of tears and smiles, after quick goodbyes and wishes of good luck, Mary left, so full of emotion she did not know whether to laugh or cry. The coachman helped her into the coach and big tears came in her eyes as it drove off. She waved her handkerchief and murmured "God bless me and keep me safe." The journey took about half an hour, a distance of about four miles, and Mary prayed as she had never prayed before for now that the reality of all this exciting adventure was about to come true, she was a little afraid and felt so alone. The Squire's home 'Orchard Mansion' was a massive house, set in exquisite gardens with all kinds of trees and shrubs imported from many foreign lands. Its great orchard was famous for its variety of fruits only grown in the gardens of Europe.

As the coach drove up the long winding avenue Mary's heart nearly stopped as she gazed upon this most elegant of buildings, its windows were ablaze with lights and she scanned the whole sprawling elegant building with an amazed feeling of wonderment. There were many coaches arriving and edging for a place to park after their passengers were deposited at the mansion's doorstep. As the guests arrived they were escorted by the squire's footman into the reception room where they were announced and then welcomed by the squire, who was elegantly dressed and who spoke for some moments with each guest when they arrived before him. When Mary's name was announced he reached out both hands to welcome her. "This is the happiest moment of my life, you look very beautiful Mary. I'm so glad you came. you are a brave girl, I know you will have a memorable evening, I can see you being swept off your feet by all the young men, but you must keep a dance for me".

Mary was glad she came, the squire had been so generous with his friendship. The stories she had heard about him were certainly untrue. "I'm so glad I came" she said, as she smiled at him. "I'm so grateful to you for all your generosity towards me, I know I will have a wonderful evening.

Mary moved on as other guests were waiting to be welcomed by the squire, who said he would join her as soon as he could. The guests were standing or sitting around in the great ballroom, listening to the orchestra warming up for its long night's performance, servants and waiters went around with trays of wine. Mary felt lost for a moment, she accepted a glass of wine and suddenly several young men surrounded her asking who she was, and where she came from. "I will tease you by telling you neither my name or where I come from, lets just say I am an orphan who wants to be adopted. Many voices cried out "May I adopt you," some men jostled each other in an attempt to get near her. One young man cried out "I know you are Princess Luceena, you father, the King is visiting this summer. Mary smiled, "Indeed you pay me a compliment I may not deserve".

The young man replied "I shall ask the squire, I'm sure he will not mind divulging your secret to me", so off he went to the squire. When he returned he looked very angry, "His lips are as tight as a clam, he would not even give me a clue, he just said, "Look at her stately figure and form your own conclusions, perhaps you are a new conquest to his harem of innocent noble ladies, you know he has a frightful record with demure young things." Mary was angry "Does it not prick your conscience to eat his food and drink his wine and enjoy the friendship he has accorded you in inviting you to his house, and in return you slander him behind his back." "Good for you, little Princess", a young man said. Mary faced the man who spoke so, "Would you have spoken of your host with more charity towards his name than he has spoke." "Perhaps not", replied the man. "In fact I believe we all would have spoken of him in a similar manner". "If I called you that what would you say" Mary asked, "I'd say you had unmasked all of us, we are here to eat his food, drink his wine and call him a wastrel for with his wealth and damned affrontances there is not a young maiden in this countryside he has not swept away from under our feet. Mary was saved from further embarrassment, as the bell for dinner rang and everyone made for the dining room. Its massiveness and beauty thrilled Mary's heart as she looked up at the beautiful decorative ceilings, and at the velvet drapes that covered the huge windows, and the sight of the massive chandeliers, made of cut glass, was a sight to inspire the soul of any man to compose a verse of poetry. Mary was seated at the head of the table beside the squire who was last to arrive. He apologised for not being on time and wished everyone welcome, especially my special guest, Miss Mary Carroll. Then the banquet began. "Do you not say a little prayer of thanks to the Lord for all this lovely food", Mary asked.

"In company as this", he said "Where there are all kinds of people with such diverse beliefs, it is better not to force ones own convictions on any one, those who believe in the Lord will best satisfy their Lord by the modesty of their own private prayer. I have no belief in anyone or anything beyond this world, that right is every ones to choose, if they wish to, it does not make them better or worse, nor does it blind their eyes to good and evil, perhaps if I look long enough at your beauty I will find your God in it. Do enjoy your food, anything you want don't hesitate to ask for it, it's all in your honour".

The feasting went on for almost two hours, afterwards the guests went into the Ballroom, where the orchestra was playing such lovely music. Mary was almost transported into the clouds with the joy and excellence that was everywhere to behold. In her long white silk dress she was really elegant, her jet black hair framed her very beautiful face with its masses of natural waves, and her pleasant smile with its enthusiasm of youth, captivated all the young men who sought to dance with her. She danced with a lightness of foot and a gracefulness of movement, it was as if she was floating on air, and had been dancing all her life. The young men she danced with her all wanted to see her again. One young man invited her to go riding with him through his large estate, and to meet his family. Mary teased all of them with the vague promise of perhaps.

As the night wore on she wondered where the Squire was, and then suddenly he came to her. He was really a very elegant man. "I hope you have kept a dance for me". "I'm so glad to see you", Mary said, "Should we dance now, the music is so beautiful". Several young men came to ask for the dance but the Squire said "Sorry, this young lady is booked for the rest of the evening". One young man quipped "Lamb for the slaughter". Like a flash the Squire caught hold of him by the throat. The young man gulped out an apology. The squire released his hold on the man and told him to keep silent in future. The squire led Mary out onto the floor, "Sorry about that", he said, "Those young spoiled prigs need keeping in their place". Mary smiled in agreement and was soon enrapt in the wonderment of all the marvellous things that were happening to her.

She pleased the squire so much, he said he had never enjoyed dancing with anyone ever in all his life as much as he enjoyed dancing with her. "You are really very lovely" he said, "you are like a breath of fresh air, so fresh and new, and so full of that endearing feminine charm that those around you feel the surge of youthful frolic racing through their veins. I could love you" he said "it would be so easy, it would be like possessing a priceless jewel to possess you".

Mary smiled saying "You said this I'm sure to so many young ladies before, it is the newness of my presence and my simple attitude of life that deludes you into believing I am all the enviable things a maiden should be; when you would know me for a week; or or a month, or a year, that newness would have gone with the seasons passing and I would be just another name in your past." "That is not so Mary, that it not so. my heart tells me it is not so."

"Your heart plays tricks on you" Mary teased, "anyway my heart is not mine to give to anyone, I've pledged it to Matthew the fisher boy, many years ago." "You cannot mean you intend to marry this fisher boy who has nothing to offer you, nothing at all". Mary smiled answering, "If you ever were really in love, estate and title have no meaning, nor has poverty and squalor, for your heart has no eyes to see these dismal things, its inspiring feeling can only react to the nature within your being, and that is to be with those you love, for ever, no matter what lot in life is theirs". The Squire mocked her words" now that you have tasted of the good things of life, the rich food, the fine clothes and the enchanting music; you will find the sight of the sea with its biting winds, and meagre harvest as unpalatable, as the sight of those that make their living on it with the sign of desolation etched into their old men's brows with the bitter brime of the sea."

Mary laughed at him "Let's dance and close our minds to the world around us." Through the strains of the music, Mary thought she could hear the tide lapping against the rocks, with its turbulent surfy waves. As she listened she could hear the oars of a boat strain its oaken timber against the gunnel, and then as she watched closer she could see it was Matthew's boat. As it came nearer he saw her and waved at her, she saw herself standing on the shore, then running in her bare feet through the water to meet him, she threw herself into his arms, as he came to meet her in that magic moment of time he was transferred to the Squire's ballroom; and as she danced with him it was a wonderful experience. She smiled at him as he looked so young and hansome, she could hear herself say "I love you a hundred times and then she cuddled close to him, her soft gentle lips kissing his cheeks and then his lips. Suddenly the dance ended and she found herself in the Squire's arms, realising what she had done she said, "O my goodness, I'm sorry". The squire laughed at her, "I wish you would dream more often", she was embarrassed for she did not know if she had kissed him believing him to be Matthew.

The night wore on and the huge clock over the entrance to the Ballroom showed it was well past 2 a.m., "Goodness", cried Mary, "it's so late I must be on my way home". He said "for me the night has just begun, I have to get drunk yet, I'll call a carriage for you if you promise to think about marrying me".

Very well; Mary promised, as good as his word he ordered a carriage for her. "I thought you would want to spend the night with me", he said adding "I suppose you are not that kind of girl". "I'm not that kind of girl", Mary answered, "I'm so grateful for this wonderful night it will be a memory that will stay with me till the day I die", she kissed his cheek, saying thanks again and then she entered the carriage which took her home. Her head was full of the wonderment of the night, and as she went about her work at home, washing and cooking she could not get the sound of the music and the excitement of the ball and feast out of her mind, even as she waited for Matthew to return from sea she saw all the faces and heard each word that was spoken to her on that memorable night. It was many days before the squire came by on his horse, "Well; my dear", he said "did you enjoy the ball". "I did indeed" Mary answered "I will never forget it, nor will I ever stop being grateful to you for having me".

"Have you thought about marrying me", he asked as he dismounted from his horse. Mary was slow to answer. "All this affluence can be yours for the asking", the Squire said as he took hold of her arms. "It will never be mine", she said, I am marrying Matthew next week. I love him and only him I will ever love". For a moment the Squire was stunned and then suddenly he threw her from him causing her to fall on the ground. "You bloody fool", he cried out, "you would dare discard my love for that of a man of straw, "I'll see you will never marry him". As he spoke he leapt on his horse and rode off spurring the animal with rage.

Mary rose from the ground and sat on a rock, she was uninjured. The Squire's threat that he would see she would never marry Matthew thwarted her mind for sometime, but with the boats coming in she soon forgot what he said. On the next day as she waited for Matthew on the shore, the squire came to her again. "Well have you got any sense into that head of yours", he said, as he dismounted from his horse. Mary looked at him with a gentle pleading look in her eyes, "I beg of you to leave me alone, I am a poor fisherman's daughter, with no estate other than the clothes I wear, nor have I any wish for more other than I am in love with Matthew and I intend to marry him, please find enough generosity in your heart to wish me well and leave me to the destiny of my own choosing, to you love and marriage is but an added joy to the host of reasons that are at your fingertips to add pleasure to the favoured life that is yours already".

"You are a witch to tease me with your beauty and your refusal to marry me. I could marry any other maiden in the land I favoured with my proposal and you who are nothing refuses all my pleadings, how you insult me, I could kill you". Angered he leapt on his horse, whipping the animal to release his fit of bad temper. When he had gone Mary buried her head and wept bitterly, she did not hear Matthew come beside her, "Mary dearest, what is the matter" he asked as he seated himself on the rocks beside her, "Nothing", she cried, as she threw her head into his arms, "It's so terrible, the Squire has been threatening to kill me if I marry you, I am afraid of him", she sobbed. "What are we going to do Matthew, I love you so much, sometimes I fear a love so perfect as ours has no right to be in the world of shadows and tears, my exceeding joy at even thinking of you must surely surpass the degree of pleasure a human being is entitled to on this earth. At times I feel a terrible sense of forboding as if a great dark cloud was descending on me encompassing me within its menacing shadows, just like there was a great storm at sea, with darkening clouds coming down almost upon you with its perturbed aggressiveness like some huge monster that was in torment with an aching wound, its anger consorts with the wind and rain to lash up the waves into an inferno of angry foam, that knows no mercy and but for the goodness of God would swamp your boat and send you all to your death, oh dearest Matthew I am so afraid the Squire will klll me I fear".

"Don't fear my dearest", Matthew consoled as he kissed her tear stained eyes, and then her cheeks and then her lips, "I'll be her when he comes by tomorrow".

To morrow came and Mary sat by the rocks, with many dreams in her head. The squire came galloping up to her on his blood mare, "Still up in the clouds", he said. Mary smiled at him, "Well, he said as he leaped off his horse, have you come to your senses yet? Have you accepted my proposal? Surely even in your obstinate head there must be some grain of sense that tells you the choice is between a life of wealth and comfort and a life of hunger and poverty here on this barren shore".

"You are wrong Squire", Mary answered, the choice is not between riches or poverty, it is between marrying a man for his gold or to marry a man for love, I must let my heart be my guide, for it is my heart that would torment me with its just rebukes for the rest of my life if I did not do it's bidding. "Love, my foot", the Squire said angrily, what an empty emotion love is let it be assailed by poverty and its attendant curses for a year or half a year, and it will become nothing more than a foolish memory that will scoff at its helpless victim every dawning of every day they live life and the living that is the insoluble meaning of real love. A man who would marry a girl into poverty is no man, he is a louse, a cowardly louse".

Mary faced him angrily, "Now that you have unmasked yourself, of the gentleman's facade or humanness I thought was in you; I would die a thousand deaths before I would let you even touch me. When you talk of vermin, where is there a more lowly creature than one who would set himself up above God himself and wield his pompous vanity to belittle God fearing people, who ask for nothing from anyone but to be left alone. I spit in your face". he lashed her with his whip, "You brazen bitch" he cried out, "I'll teach you not to insult me". He aimed his whip at her again, as she fell to the ground crying out in agony. Suddenly from behind the rock Matthew rushed forward, grasping the Squire's whip from his upheld hand and turning it on the Squire, who cried out "How dare you take my whip you scum. "I'll have the law down on you for this outrage". As Matthew whipped the terrified man Mary rushed forward to catch Matthew's hand, "He has had enough" she cried out, you'll kill him, Matthew please", as she spoke she rushed in front of Matthew restraining his hand, "Don't Matthew", she cried out and they both watched the Squire as he ran to his horse shouting, "I'll have the law upon you both, you are nothing but scum, you will never live to enjoy the bliss of marriage". As he rode away in a rage Mary buried her head in Matthew's breast, weeping bitterly.

It was the custom in those times, the night before a wedding for the boy's parents to have a hooley in their house, and to invite the prospective bride and her family as well as all the neighbours, and so it was that Matthew's parents had such a festivity. With old Paddy Marky playing the melodian and Micky and Jimmy Smith playing the fiddles, it was a merry occasion, which went on all night. On that night a storm blew in from the North East, and the fishermen had their boats pulled up on the banks, Mary and Matthew were filled with the sense of warm young love that has always been a special blessing of young lovers. Matthew and Mary sang a duet and as the night wore on and the drink flowed freely, everyone was anxious to sing. Matthew's mother prepared supper, and everyone was happy and paying tributes to the young couple. Suddenly there was a loud banging on the door and an old woman Bessy Jones, burst in crying out "My son, my son, has gone out in his boat, will someone save him for me, he's a wild lad I know, but its the poteen that's driving him insane. Matthew's mother tried to console the demented woman; "sit down Bessy", she said "I'll make you a cup of tea."

"I don't want your tea, it's my son's life I want", she cried out. "Will none of you save him for me, you were his best friend Matthew, it was him that risked his life to rescue your nets from the storm last spring, do you forget so quickly". "I don't forget Bessy", Matthew said but you know well enough that to go to sea on such a night would mean certain death."

"That is so", Matthew's father added, "with that gale blowing from the North East, out boats would not survive for any distance, all we can do is pray that the Lord will save him." "That's an easy way out of your obligation to help a friend in need", Bessy cried staring at Matthew she said "he always spoke of you as if you were his hero, the poor foolish lad he would help anyone in distress.

"I will do my best to save him" Matthew said as he reached to the side of the fireplace for his waders, and taking his oilskin down from the wall where it hung, he said "some of you had better help me to get the boat down from the banks". "It is madness Matthew" one of the fishermen said, "I would not take a pension and go out on the sea in that gale".

Bessy Jane stared at the man "You never had the backbone to do anything for anyone but for yourself, she said, adding there never was anyone of your breed that had the spunk of a mouse in them".

Mary was demented with fear for Matthew's safety. "My dearest", she pleaded, if anything happens to you, I will have no reason to live, I cannot beg of you not to try to save Bessy's son, for I know you are too brave not to try, I love you so much and have feared for our love for so long, alas this is the hour of destiny, all my fears and forebodings are in the hands of fate. If we are not married on earth then we will be married in heaven. "I will be back my dearest, be sure of that, for me the storms on the sea are as common place as the stars in the sky". He kissed her lips and leaving the cottage said, "Don't worry Mother, I'll be alright", and to the fiddlers he said, "Keep plenty of roisin on your bows. dance till dawn, I'll be back.

Mary pulled on her cape and hood, "I'll go to see you off, you had better come as well Bessy to show them where to search". As they made their way over the shore to the banks where the boats were, Bessy Jane pointed out to the sea, crying out "I saw him out there". This was an impossibility for with the raging storm, the blinding spray whipped up by the high winds, one could barely see a distance of 5 yards in front of them, yet she kept pointing out to sea crying, "out there ahead of you". Soon with the frantic efforts of all his friends, Matthew's boat was in the water. Mary who was demented could but hold her footing by holding on to one of the men, suddenly Matthew's boat was at sea, and out of view, "You best come home" one of the men said, there's nothing you can do here".

I will not leave this place until Matthew returns, I will kneel on the rocks and pray for his safety" said Mary. "But you will perish here with the wind and cold", the man pleaded, but she walked to the wet rocks, which the tide had receded from, as it was beginning to ebb, and knelt down and prayed. Her father came to her, "Mary my child" he said as he knelt beside her, taking her into his arms "You will get your death of cold here, there is nothing anyone can do here, but wait, and when there is any news I will send someone home to tell you". Mary kissed her father's face which was wet with the brime of the sea, "I love you daddy, I love Matthew too, I cannot leave here till he returns; Oh God save him for me".

Her father took his oilskin coat off and wrapped it around his daughter, "My poor child, you will die here". Soon her mother came with some women, she hugged Mary, "Mary my love, be sensible, come home, the wind and cold will take your life here". "Kneel and pray with me" Mary said so gently and sincerely, her mother and all the women knelt and prayed with her.

All through the long dark hours of the night Mary and her friends knelt on the rocks, and as the first light of dawn made it's way through the dark angry clouds, pieces of Matthew's boat was washed up on the shore. Her father came to Mary saying, "He is lost at sea, there is no further purpose in staying here, pieces of his boat have been found on the shore, Mary looked up at her father, and then at heaven, "Why, Oh God why", she murmured.

"Come home my dearest child" her mother pleaded, it breaks my heart and your father's to see you torture yourself here". Bring me my wedding dress" she pleaded "I want to be dressed in my new dress when I meet my dearest Matthew, I looked so pretty in it". Her mother was about to plead with her to come home when Mary kissed her cheeks. "Mother dear do this for me and I will pray for you in heaven". Seeing there was no point in pleading she rushed home and got the lovely white dress which she helped Mary put on. The storm had abated and there was some warm sunshine. "Even the sun has come out for my wedding day", she murmured. Suddenly the squire came over the rocks and facing Mary he said "It's strange how it took the stormy seas to leave you with no one to love you but me, even at this late moment I can rescue you from the squalor and misery of this God forsaken place".

"Do you not see my wedding dress, I'm to be married today to Matthew the boy I love", she smiled at the squire who was angered at her. "You little stupid slut", he cried out "the fate that has befallen you is too good for you, I don't know why I waste my breath on you". "Leave her alone", Bessy Jane cried out as she faced the squire "leave her alone".

"Get out of my way you tramp" he shouted at the angry woman, who took a little bag from her ragged cloak, "Here is your blood money, the money you paid me to pretend my son was at sea; here it is", she threw it at him, take it and hide yourself and it away from me for the rest of your wicked life. As she spoke the men came in close to him, their anger so great the squire knew they meant to kill him. "Surely you don't believe this evil woman who would not mind stooping to any depths of degradation to have you harm me", he said, "because she has been evicted from my house for begging and stealing firewood on many occasions". As he spoke he backed away from the angry men, who knew Bessy Jane had told the truth. Suddenly he began to run, as he did so he tripped on the slippery rocks, and his head was smashed. He screamed out in agony, and when the fishermen reached him he was dead. His blood and brains were splattered all over the white rocks, which in that moment turned black. "Is he dead" Mary asked, to be told he had smashed his brains on the rocks. "He was an evil man", Mary murmured, and staring at Bessy Jane she said, "you did not put much value on my Matthe's life, 20 gold sovereigns, was that all he was worth?" "I will hide myself", she cried, "and my shame away from you all for the rest of my life. I am a sinful woman," as she said those words she ran away screaming.

The tide was on the shore and it lapped upon the rocks coming nearer each moment to where Mary knelt, the long flowing white dress almost at times blowing out and touching the foam. "All is over now my child" Mary's mother said as she knelt down beside the pale dying girl, "will you not come home with us". Facing her mother with an almost angelic look in her young tear stained face she said "I am going home to my

Matthew, he is waiting for me, don't cry dearest mother there should be no tears on my wedding day, I want you all to be as happy as I am. It is strange the ways of God, when the world turns against you, and you believe you are lost, suddenly you realize the way to heaven is often through a dark tunnel or to be lost in the depths of the ocean. I am so very happy, I can see myself at the squire's ball, the orchestra is playing such wonderful music, and the squire was asking me to dance with him. I am in the middle of the dance when the lapping of the sea upon the seashore fills the ballroom with its familiar sound and as I close my eyes the Squire disappears and it is Matthew who holds me in his arms, he is so young and so manly, I remember how I clung close to him kissing his forehead and then his soft warm cheek, and then his lips which pulsated with the ecstasy of the love we both felt, in that blissful moment; heaven joined us together". As she spoke these soulful words, which were born out of the passionate depths of her young love filled heart, the world around her seemed to become a reflection of the perfection of paradise, with the sky above her and the sea which edged it's way almost touching her dress. all one enchanted world, filled with the heavenly choirs of angels, which made dying a wonderful adventure. As if it was but stepping onto a magic carpet which would soar away to a land of eternity where those she loved were waiting for her. As Mary's world of eternity welcomed her soul into it's paradise she murmured, "Dearest Matthew at last we are together, this is indeed our wedding day." As these soulful words sealed her lips for ever; her frail lifeless body crumpled on the rocks and as her mother clutched her in her arms, she, like all who were present felt no grief, for this brave young girl, who in spite of the adversities that plagued her young life had been rewarded for her courage and faithfullness to the boy she loved by having her marriage blessed with the hands of the creator in his paradise, her and her loved ones home for ever.

Though the centuries have passed since that memorable day, and this village of a few houses has grown into a large seaside resort, the memory of Mary and Matthew is still alive, for an the rock where she knelt is the mark of her knees, and the mark of her teeth is on the rock she fell forward upon as she died, and till the end of time the story of Mary and Matthew will inspire young lovers with courage and determination and hope, no matter what adversity may assail them.

By DANNY HUGHES.

SAINT BRIGID'S SHRINE

Saint Brigid's Shrine at Faughart is but seven miles from Blackrock and is one of the major shrines to our Lady in Ireland and many cures have been accredited to those who visit this shrine and pray to Saint Brigid its founder. Brigid was favoured with many insights into the mind of Our Lady and when she was very young, she saw in Our Lady's mind a desire for a place of worship. At Faughart she used her gift and charm to have a farmer give her as much land as her cloak would cover and to the farmer's amazement her cloak stretched over the amount of land she needed to build her shrine upon. So, with the help of many holy women, after many years, Our Lady's Shrine was built and soon crowds of people came to pray at it and their prayers were answered with many cures of illnesses and consolation of troubled minds.

Brigid died at an early age and her love for Our Lady and her Creator was soon recognised as she was canonized a Saint.

Today, this holy shrine is known as Saint Brigid's Shrine and from many lands people come to kneel and pray on the same ground the little Saint knelt upon. She is recognised by a cross made of reeds such as she found inspiration and solace of heart and soul from.

OUR LADY'S WELL

But three miles from Blackrock is Our Lady's Well. This remarkable well which came into being many years ago when, it is said, that the people of the town of Dundalk were beset with an unnatural plague which killed many hundreds of people. It was when all medical remedies failed to stem the time of this terrible scourge the people began to pray to Our Lady with such fervour that on the eve of her birthday, the fifteenth of August, at midnight a great well of cool, clear water sprung from the ground and when the ailing people came and drank the water and bathed their wounds in it, they were miraculously cured of their illness.

That was many years ago and since those days a lovely shrine has been built at the well and on the eve of Our Lady's birthday, the fifteenth of August, many people come to watch this remarkable well rise from its deep spring at the midnight hour, and spill its clear cool, healing water over the top of the well and many still speak of the solace of mind and the cure of ailing limbs from the water of Our Lady's Well.

THE LONG WOMAN'S GRAVE

The Long Woman's grave is about fifteen miles from Blackrock and is worthy of a visit. It is in the Cooley Mountains — overlooking Carlingford Bay.

Legend has it that a French Princess called Viona Holly was so desirious of possessing a large area of land — she married an Irishman called James Thornton, who told her he owned all the land as far as her eyes could see from his home on the top of the mountain—and when the poor Princess landed at his home she found it was a small hut hidden among the rocks on the mountain top and from its doors and windows, she could see but a short distance between the rocks. Her pride was so hurt that she was about to trust a dagger through her heart when an old woman, who had magical powers offered to take her spirit from her and this she did. The old woman put the Princess's spirit into a sprawling tree nearby, and she called it the Holly Tree. The red berries signify her beauty and the thorns signify her greed.

Her body was laid to rest beside here husband's mountain hut and her grave is identifiable with the many stones which cover her grave which is over seven feet long.

SAINT FURSEY'S CHURCH

Saint Fursey's Church, built in 1803, is but a mile from Blackrock and is a fine building worthy of the name of the remarkable Saint this Church is called after.

Saint Fursey's father, was called Fintan, who was the son of a pagan King called Finlog. When Fintan was twenty five years of age, he met and fell in love with Geiges, the daughter of the High King of Ireland. Fintan, who was a pagan, eventually became a Christian to please his wife who was a Christian—but both Fintan's father and Geiges father disapproved of the marriage and the young couple were banished to the West of Ireland where their son, Fursey was born. St. Brendan baptised the child and when he grew up he was educated in the monastery which St. Brendan founded on the island of Inchiquin, in Lough Corrib. Eventually Fursey joined the order founded by St. Brendan and was ordained to the priesthood. It was not long before Fursey's sanctity and great learning was know far and wide. He was favoured with supernatural visions of Heaven and Hell and he died at Mezerolles in Picardy on January sixteenth 684 and was buried at Peronne, France. In time a Shrine was erected above his grave and it is said King Clovis II and Queen Bethilde were buried in the same grave. At last he was canonised a Saint and no more fitting tribute could be paid to his memory than this fine church at Haggardstown but one mile from Blackrock.

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I

As I look out over Blackrock shore, at the early break of day
I can see the Cooley mountain cloaked in her shawl of misty grey
And as I watch this slumbering giant reach up to touch the sky
I marvel at this beauty which thrills my gazing eye.

II

And then I watch the greying clouds give place to the morning light.
And in that luxury of nature the new day dawns so bright
And then I see the warm sun rays shine down over the sea
Like a million silver fairies dancing a jig for me.

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CASTLEBELLINGHAM

BELLINGHAM CASTLE—four miles from Blackrock has many treasured reminders of the past. The Castle was built in the 17th century and was the home of the Bellingham Family. It is now developed into a fine hotel—its design and structure has the inevitable genius of the craftsmanship of the planners of that period— it is set amid the wooded and well set out grounds of this large estate—with the lovely Glyde river running almost past its doorstep.

The Bellinghams who built and lived in this Castle gave their name to the village of houses on the estate.

On this property is the only working wooden mill on the East coast of Ireland—it was built in the tenth century and is still working to-day as efficiently as it did when it first was built—again this mill shows the genius and craftsmanship of the men and women of those past centuries. It is said King William slept in the Castle while on his way to the Battle of the Boyne, and one of Ireland's most colourful sons "Napper Tandy", the son of a Presbyterian minister is buried on the estate. After many battles in the cause of the oppressed Irish, he married a niece of the Bellinghams and his remains are interred in the estate.

DANIEL HUGHES.

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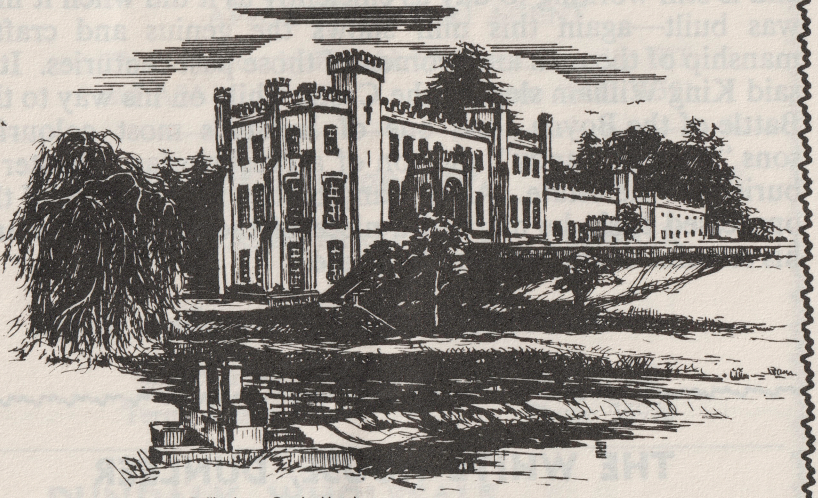

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